

says no one ever had to guess where they stood with David. "David and I had a very close relationship," she says. "He always said, 'Mom, I know there isn't any sense in me trying to lie to you. I know you're just going to find out the truth anyway.'"

What is the truth now is that our Nation must never forget SGT David K. Cooper's service, nor can we ever forget the loss and pain caused to his family by his enormous sacrifice. I hope they will remember that this Senate is proud to honor SGT David K. Cooper for his bravery, his patriotism, and his love of country.

Madam President, I yield the floor and suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. MENENDEZ. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to a period of morning business for up to 1 hour, with Senators permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes, with the time equally divided and controlled between the two leaders or their designees, with the majority controlling the first half and the Republicans controlling the second half.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from New Jersey.

CASTRO BROTHERS

Mr. MENENDEZ. Madam President, two weeks ago, the democratically elected leaders of the Western Hemisphere met for the Summit of the Americas. The Castro regime in Cuba was not invited, because it has violated the democratic charter of the Organization of American States for the last 5 decades.

At the same time as that meeting in Trinidad and Tobago, Raul Castro gave a speech in Venezuela. He said he would be willing to negotiate with the United States and put everything on the table. Many considered this "news."

Well, let me tell you, those comments aren't news to anyone who has followed the rhetoric of the regime over the decades. The Castros have made promise after promise and none of their promises have resulted in substantial change on the island, none of their promises have resulted in the re-

lease of the labor leaders, journalists or clergymen jailed for no crime other than speaking their minds, the end of the network of government spies on every block, or the granting of basic human rights that we in the United States take for granted. None of their promises have resulted in economic freedom for the millions of Cubans who try to get by on less than a dollar a day.

And so it was hardly news that not long after Raul Castro spoke, his older brother Fidel made comments clarifying that nothing would change, and blaming all conditions in Cuba on the United States.

He said President Obama acted with "autosuficiencia" y "superficialidad", he called him conceited and superficial.

I am surprised that Secretary Clinton, in her remarks, would jump so fast to consider that good news.

While Raul Castro spoke at a meeting in Venezuela, there was another gathering going on in Cuba. It was a gathering of state security agents and secret police, outside the home of Jorge Luis García Pérez, known as "Antúnez."

With tremendous courage, Antúnez began a hunger strike to protest the oppressive Castro regime. In response, agents descended on the house last March 17. According to Amnesty International, they have orders to use force against and arrest anyone to prevent them from entering the house, including anyone who could provide medical treatment.

Antúnez and three other Cubans have vowed to continue their protest until the torture of political prisoner Mario Alberto Pérez Aguilera, held at the Santa Clara Provincial Prison, ceases immediately.

They will continue their protest until he is taken out of a tiny solitary confinement cell, until he is no longer beaten and forced to starve, until the regime allows Antúnez' sister Caridad García Pérez to rebuild her home destroyed by the hurricanes last year, which they have not allowed, as further punishment to these activists.

From his house in Placetas, Cuba, Antúnez wrote me a letter on April 13. Here's an excerpt, in Spanish:

Compatriotas a nombre de nuestro pueblo cubano persistan en sus nobles y sinceros esfuerzos, sepan que para los cubanos la libertad, la dignidad y el respeto a los derechos humanos tienen mucho más permanencia e importancia que las ventajas económicas que puedan traer los viajes de turismo y las llegadas de insumos que financiarán más que al pueblo a la cruel tiranía que nos oprime.

He said:

Those who continue their noble and sincere efforts on behalf of the Cuban people, please know, that for Cubans, liberty, dignity and respect for human rights are much more permanent and important than the economic advantages that might come with visiting tourists and the arrival of products, which will benefit the cruel tyranny that oppresses us more than the Cuban people.

That is the kind of courage that can break a dictatorship. That is the kind

of courage we should support. And that is the kind of person whose advice we should heed, the human rights activist, the Cuban who sacrifices day and night in a peaceful struggle for freedom, these are the voices we should listen to when we are making our policy toward the Castro regime.

Some like to cling to a romantic notion of the Castros, but we cannot lose sight of these brutal facts. There is no indication that political prisoners are being released, free speech is being allowed or Cubans are being granted basic liberties that we take for granted.

For the Organization of American States to readmit a regime that engages in this type of systematic suppression of human rights, it would have to rip up its Inter-American Democratic Charter as a farce. It would have to ignore Article 78 of the declaration, reaffirming, "the legitimacy of electoral processes and full respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms." And it would be sending a clear signal to other countries moving in the wrong direction, away from democracy, that it is perfectly OK to do so.

In respect to the very complicated choices we have on Cuba policy, President Obama has proven himself a man of action. I support his allowing Cuban-Americans more opportunities to travel to Cuba, because I think families should have the chance to be reunited.

On the other hand, and although I support finding ways to improve the financial situation of the Cuban people, I think allowing unlimited remittances was not the right move, when the Castro regime still takes for itself up to 30 percent of all the money sent.

The administration also announced changes regarding telecommunications policy. Let me be clear: in spite of the fact that the regime has rejected such gestures in the past, I hope that it will now allow U.S. telecommunications companies to increase the flow of information to and from the island. That said, we need to be sure to prevent a repeat of what happened in China, where U.S. telecommunications firms helped the Chinese government monitor Internet users and control content. U.S. companies cannot and should not censor Internet searches and block Web sites at the request of the regime.

But mainly what we have learned from these good-faith actions on the part of the United States is that they have not resulted in any change of behavior from the regime in Cuba.

We have traded concessions and gotten only rhetoric in return. We have extended our hand, while the Cuban regime maintains its iron-handed clenched fist.

We cannot allow ourselves to start down a slippery slope of relaxing restrictions, that only winds up allowing the Castro regime to strengthen the iron fist by which it rules.

The press is reporting that the State Department is looking to hold talks on migration and counternarcotics with the Castro regime.